

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image processing apparatus comprising:

data storage means for storing application data concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus so
5 that rewriting of said application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

data acquisition means for accessing a server that
10 stores application data, used for updating, as update data and for obtaining said update data;

data updating means for rewriting said application data stored in said data storage means to provide said update data obtained by said data acquisition means; and

15 acquisition method storage means for storing, in advance, an acquisition method designated for obtaining said update data,

wherein, when instruction information for instructing the updating of said application data is entered
20 in said image processing apparatus, said data acquisition means accesses said server in accordance with said acquisition method stored in said acquisition method storage means and obtains said update data.

2. An image processing apparatus according to claim
25 1, wherein said acquisition method storage means stores setup data that are required to obtain said update data using said acquisition method designated in advance.

3. An image processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said acquisition method storage means stores, as said setup data, at least one address for said server for storing update data and an ID or a password for accessing said server.

4. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said acquisition method is a method for using HTTP (Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol) or FTP (File Transfer Protocol).

10 5. An image processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said instruction information includes data type information indicating the type of said update data; and wherein, based on, at the least, either data type information included in said instruction information or one of several
15 identification data sets for a serial number unique to said image processing apparatus, a product number, a model name, a product version, a model version or an application data version that is stored in said image processing apparatus, said data acquisition means specifies update data stored in
20 an HTTP server or an FTP server and obtains said specified update data from said HTTP server or said FTP server.

6. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said acquisition method is a method for using electronic mail.

25 7. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said instruction information is entered through using an operating unit of said image processing apparatus,

or is received from an external device connected to said image processing apparatus.

8. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

5 validity condition setup means for setting a condition, for a validity term or a validity limit, under which said data acquisition means obtains said update data or said data update means updates said application data; and

10 inhibiting means for inhibiting, when said instruction information entered for said image processing apparatus does not satisfy said condition designated by said validity condition setup means, the operation of said data acquisition means for acquiring said update data, or said data updating means for updating said application data.

15 9. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

20 validity condition setup means for setting a condition, for a validity term or a validity limit, under which said data acquisition means obtains said update data or said data update means updates said application data; and

25 instruction error notification means for, when said instruction information entered for said image processing apparatus does not satisfy said condition designated by said validity condition setup means, issuing a notification to a transmission source of said instruction information that said instruction information does not satisfy said condition concerning said validity term or said validity limit.

10. An image processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said validity condition setup means designates said condition concerning said validity term or said validity limit based on validity information for said validity term or said validity limit included in said instruction information, or in accordance with an instruction received from an external device connected to said image processing apparatus or an instruction entered using said operating means of said image processing apparatus.

11. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said data acquisition means accesses said server by using said acquisition method stored in said acquisition method storage means, and obtains test data for a communication test.

12. An image processing apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising:

error detection means for, when said test data are obtained by said data acquisition means, detecting an error that has occurred before said test data are obtained, or an error in said obtained test data; and

communication error notification means for providing notification that said error has been detected by said error detection means.

13. An image processing apparatus comprising:

data storage means for storing application data, concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, so that rewriting of said application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

5 data acquisition means for accessing a server that stores application data used for updating as update data and for obtaining said update data;

data updating means for rewriting said application data, stored in said data storage means, as said update data obtained by said data acquisition means; and

10 acquisition method selection means for selecting, from among a plurality of acquisition methods prepared to obtain update data, an acquisition method to be used for the acquisition of said update data,

15 wherein, when instruction information for instructing the updating of said application data is entered in said image processing apparatus, said data acquisition means accesses said server, by using said acquisition method selected by said acquisition method selection means, and obtains said update data.

20 14. An image processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said acquisition method selection means selects an acquisition method used for the acquisition of update data, and designates setup data required to obtain update data using said acquisition method.

25 15. An image processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said setup data includes, at the least, one address for said server used to store said update data, and a

required ID or password for accessing said server.

16. An image processing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein, based on setup data entered using an operating unit for said image processing apparatus or setup data entered using an external device connected to said image processing apparatus, said acquisition method selection means designates required setup data by using said acquisition method employed to obtain said update data.

17. An image processing apparatus comprising:
10 data storage means for storing application data, concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, so that rewriting of said application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

15 data acquisition means for accessing a server that stores application data used for updating as update data, and for obtaining said update data; and

data updating means for rewriting said application data, stored in said data storage means, to provide said update data obtained by said data acquisition means,

wherein a plurality of acquisition methods are selectably prepared, in advance, and are used for the acquisition of update data.

25 18. An image processing apparatus comprising:

data storage means for storing application data, concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, so

that rewriting of said application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

5 data acquisition means for accessing a server that stores application data used for updating as update data, and for obtaining said update data; and

data updating means for rewriting said application data stored in said data storage means to provide said update data obtained by said data acquisition means,

10 wherein, when instruction information, for instructing the updating of said application data, is entered in said image processing apparatus, said data acquisition means specifies update data, stored in said server, based on, at the least, either data type information indicating the type of update data included in said instruction information or identification information, stored in said image processing apparatus, for identifying individual image processing apparatuses and for obtaining said specified update data from said server.

20 19. An image processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said identification information includes one of a serial number unique to said image processing apparatus, a product name, a model name, a product version, a model version or an application data version.

20. An image processing apparatus comprising:
data storage means for storing application data,

concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, so that rewriting of application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus, based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

data acquisition means for accessing a server that stores application data used for updating as update data, and for obtaining said update data;

data updating means for rewriting said application data, stored in said data storage means, to provide said update data obtained by said data acquisition means;

validity condition setup means for setting a condition, for a validity term or a validity limit, under which said application data is updated by said data updating means; and

inhibiting means for inhibiting, when said condition set by said validity condition setup means is not satisfied, the operation of said data updating means for updating said application data.

21. An image processing apparatus comprising:

data storage means for storing application data, concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, so that rewriting of said application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

data acquisition means for accessing a server that

stores, as update data, application data used for updating,
and obtaining said update data;

data updating means for rewriting said application
data, stored in said data storage means, to provide said
5 update data obtained by said data acquisition means;

validity condition setup means for setting a
condition, for a validity term or a validity limit, under
which said application data is updated by said data updating
means; and

10 inhibiting means for inhibiting, when said condition
set by said validity condition setup means is not satisfied,
the operation of said data acquisition means for obtaining
said application data.

22. An image processing apparatus according to
15 claim 20, further comprising:

instruction error notification means for issuing,
when said instruction information entered in said image
processing apparatus for instructing the updating of said
application data does not satisfy said condition designated
20 by said validity condition setup means, a notification
provided for a transmission source of said instruction
information to the effect that said instruction information
does not satisfy said condition for said validity term or
said validity limit.

25 23. An image processing apparatus according to
claim 22, wherein said validity condition setup means
designates said condition, for said validity term or said

validity limit, based on validity information for said validity term or said validity limit that is included in said instruction information, or in accordance with an instruction received from an external device connected to said image processing apparatus or an instruction entered at an operating unit of said image processing apparatus.

24. A data processing apparatus, which transmits, to an image processing apparatus that stores application data that concerns the usage of said image processing apparatus and that is to be rewritten, instruction information instructing the acquisition, from a server, of update data for said application and the rewriting of said application using said update data,

wherein validity data designating a condition for a validity term or a validity limit, for obtaining said update data or for updating said application data, are added to said instruction information and are transmitted to said image processing apparatus.

25. An image processing apparatus comprising:
data storage means for storing application data, concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, so that rewriting of said application data is enabled;

control means for controlling the operation of said image processing apparatus based on said application data stored in said data storage means;

data acquisition means for accessing a server that stores application data used for updating as update data, and

for obtaining said update data; and

data updating means for rewriting said application data stored in said data storage means using said update data obtained by said data acquisition means,

5 wherein, upon receiving an instruction to obtain test data for a communication test, said data acquisition means accesses said server in which test data are stored and obtains said test data from said server.

26. An image processing apparatus according to
10 claim 25, further comprising:

error detection means for, when said test data are obtained by said data acquisition means, detecting an error that occurred up until said test data were obtained, or an error in said obtained test data; and

15 communication error notification means for transmitting notification of said error detected by said error detection means.

27. A data processing apparatus, which transmits, to an image processing apparatus that stores application data, concerning the usage of said image processing apparatus, that
20 is to be rewritten, instruction information instructing the acquisition from a server of update data for said application, and the rewriting of said application using said update data, comprising:

25 setup instruction means for instructing said image processing apparatus to instruct the setup of an acquisition method for obtaining said update data; and

data acquisition instruction means for instructing said image processing apparatus to obtain test data for a communication test.

28. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, which inhibits said data acquisition means from obtaining said update data, or said data updating means from updating said application data, while said image processing apparatus is performing another process.